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AUTHOR	Russell, Donovan; Engels, John, Ed.
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ABSTRACT

Basic education programs in Africa are most successful at the community and school levels. At the community level, program implementers search for parents who are motivated, informed, and skilled at creating an environment conducive to student learning. In classrooms, they look for greater numbers of children experiencing a high quality, pupil-centered learning experience. Over the years, a number of U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) basic education programs have collaborated with the U.S. Peace Corps to ensure such results. This pamphlet presents lessons learned by USAID. The discussion describes four broad types of collaboration that have occurred between USAID and the Peace Corps, provides illustrative examples of collaboration, and suggests ways each could be practiced and promoted effectively. (BT)

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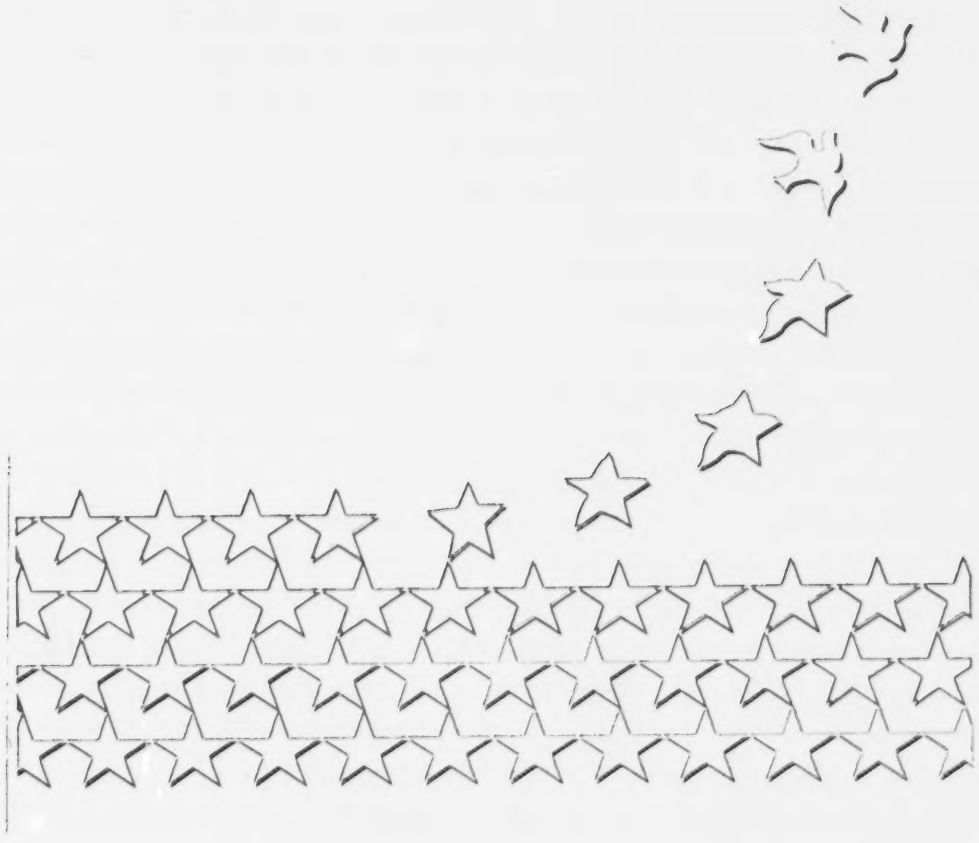

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How this pamphlet came about

Our basic education programs in Africa are most successful when their fruits are borne at the community and school levels. At the community level, we look for parents who are motivated, informed, and skilled at creating an environment conducive to student learning. In classrooms, we look for greater numbers of children experiencing a high quality, pupil-centered learning experience.

Over the years a number of USAID basic education programs have collaborated with the U.S. Peace Corps to ensure such results. This pamphlet presents some of what USAID has learned in the process. Donovan Russell undertook the research for this pamphlet and wrote the initial draft. John Engels provided additional writing and editing assistance and designed this pamphlet.

The initiative for this project came entirely from USAID's Africa Bureau, which hopes that it represents a helpful first step toward fuller USAID cooperation with Peace Corps—in Africa, Washington, DC, and around the world.

Julie Owen-Rea and Kay Freeman
Bureau for Africa
Office of Sustainable Development

Summary

The following discussion describes four broad types of collaboration that have occurred between USAID and the Peace Corps, provides illustrative examples of such collaboration, and suggests ways each could be practiced and promoted more effectively.

1. Informal work for a Peace Corps volunteer with a USAID project

This least structured of collaborations is practiced widely. It has a PCV provide informal assistance to USAID contract personnel. The Peace Corps ensures that the work is consistent with the volunteer's project plan and the overall country strategy, but other than this initial review and approval does not provide program guidance or supervision. The work is supervised by USAID, while the PCV continues to receive normal Peace Corps services such as housing, travel, training, medical, security, living allowance, liaison with host organizations, and official clearances. USAID and its contractors have no support responsibilities, although a PCV's work may be aided by facilities, supplies, equipment, or transport used by the contract organization. As these activities constitute "associated" rather than "primary" duties for the PCV, it is important that the PCVs also budget enough time to form the grassroots

relationships that distinguish their contributions to sustainable development.

Examples of this kind of collaboration

- A PCV fluent in the local language assists a USAID project with inservice teacher training.
- A PCV with excellent computer skills helps a USAID education project with report layout.
- A PCV familiar with the area delivers materials to remote schools on horseback for a USAID project.
- A PCV assists a USAID project to produce radio instruction tapes.
- A PCV helps a USAID project to collect research data.
- A PCV assists a local community to carry out a project supported by a USAID program.

Ways to increase the chances of success

- USAID and Peace Corps missions can regularly share information about program activities (and opportunities for collaboration).
- USAID staff can reassure themselves that the PCVs have the requisite skills.
- USAID and Peace Corps staff can work to make their collaborative arrangements as uncomplicated by red tape as possible.

- PCVs can learn that it is appropriate to seek opportunities to work on USAID projects and that the work is within their capacity. Peace Corps can encourage PCVs to work with their supervisors to identify such opportunities. USAID and Peace Corps missions should value the experience that PCVs might gain through involvement with a USAID project.
- USAID can learn to value the insights that PCVs—who know local languages and live and work with host-country people—can bring to a USAID project.
- Peace Corps and USAID staff can help each other understand their respective agencies' planning and management mechanisms, with the goal of exploring work opportunities for PCVs when possible and appropriate.
- Peace Corps and USAID can ensure that PCVs who, perhaps frustrated with a primary assignment or more comfortable with the work environment with a USAID project, maintain their commitment to their primary assignments.

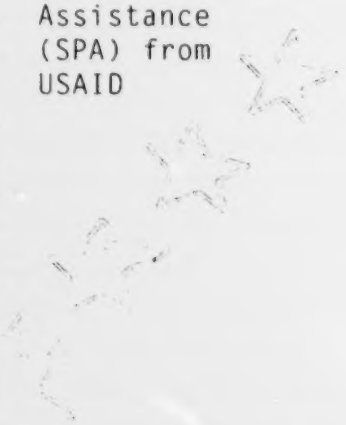
Ways to promote this type of collaboration

- USAID and Peace Corps could hold periodic joint workshops to increase

mutual awareness of program planning, project design, and ongoing projects. Both could also familiarize themselves with each other's basic missions so that collaboration, when it happens, is appropriately balanced.

- One person at a USAID mission could be designated to keep up on all Peace Corps activities.
- USAID program officers could look for ways that PCVs might be of assistance through informal assignments.
- USAID contractor personnel could be asked to suggest PCV assistance that would be helpful.
- USAID could invite the Peace-Corps education program officer to discuss both the mission's goals in the sector and to explore ways they might collaborate to achieve them.
- USAID personnel could initiate a review of the mission's education activities to see where collaboration with Peace Corps might enhance impact, local participation, and sustainability.
- USAID and Peace Corps, especially those considering a collaborative effort, could meet to discuss previous collaborative efforts and seek lessons to capitalize on successes and avoid problems.

2. Formal work for a PCV with Small Project Assistance (SPA) from USAID



The Small Project Assistance, or SPA program, is straightforward, widely used, and makes very little administrative demand on USAID missions. The program supports self-help, community based, sustainable development activities.

USAID/Washington annually transfers SPA grant funds to Peace Corps. Peace Corps then allocates the funds to its missions as needed to sponsor SPA projects. Participating local communities provide in-kind contributions and additional resources. In 1995 and 1996, there were 1,400 SPA efforts in 85 countries. Between 1987 and 1997 there were 6,000. More than 5,000 communities and 2 million host country individuals have benefited. In 1997, local contributions exceeded SPA-provided funds. Small projects are developed by community organizations and a PCV.

To participate, a PCV must have attended an SPA and/or a project development and management workshop offered by Peace Corps, and must also have been at site for six months. The six-month minimum is imposed because PCVs need time to gain credibility from their work and community relations to mobilize genuine local participation in support of a joint effort.

SPA is the most flexible and most used PASA (Participating Agency Service Agreement) between USAID and Peace Corps. However, there are other PASAs available for collaborative efforts in other areas, e.g., basic education initiatives.

Peace Corps and USAID missions review proposals, and Peace Corps program officers monitor projects. Eighty percent of all community projects started through SPA are still in operation after ten years.

Examples of this kind of collaboration

A PCV and USAID resources:

- Help a chamber of commerce establish a job-training center that becomes self-supporting through manufacture of chairs, tables, and other items.
- Help a community establish a women in development and girls' education initiative related to improving literacy, numeracy, and health care/nutrition.
- Help redevelop a nongovernmental organization's (NGO) family planning and child survival project.
- Help a school build a resource center that serves students and adults.
- Help a community environmental education and resource conservation effort by developing instructional materials and organizing workshops.
- Help a school establish a computer lab for literacy instruction.
- Help a local NGO develop teaching materials on water and sanitation and assist in the reconstruction of a village water supply.

Ways to increase the chances of success

- PCVs can assess whether their two-year assignment will leave enough time to take on an SPA project and still complete their primary assignment.
- USAID and Peace Corps can publicize the SPA program as a potential resource.
- Peace Corps missions can emphasize the continuation of SPA efforts from one PCV to another; thus, good projects that need a little more time, can be sustained.
- To prevent a Peace Corps mission from becoming discouraged with SPA, the PCV, his supervisor, and the country mission can plan carefully from the outset the level of effort and the ambitiousness the potential activity will require.
- Peace Corps missions can continue their emphasis on integrating the PCVs' primary assignments with related community development initiatives, e.g., classroom teaching enriched by real life problem-solving.
- USAID missions can learn that collaborating on SPA is administratively simple; in fact, Peace Corps handles virtually all of the work.
- USAID can make sure it is aware of the value of Peace Corps activities, many of which serve as precursors or successors to USAID projects.

- USAID can take advantage of the design information that can be gleaned from knowledge gained from SPA-supported activities.
- Peace Corps missions can remind PCVs that SPA projects may be infinitely varied in goals and size. Some missions may wish to discourage large, expensive "infrastructure" projects, especially if they believe they will undermine the PCVs' credibility in the eyes of their hosts.
- USAID can reassure Peace Corps that it will not micromanage SPA projects.
- Supervisors can help PCVs avoid making the SPA project into a full-time assignment.
- USAID and Peace Corps missions can establish procedures to eliminate the possibility of pressure from the embassy or USAID to undertake SPA projects that favor any host-country individuals or organizations.

Ways to promote this type of collaboration

- A USAID mission could invite Peace Corps personnel to an annual discussion of opportunities to reinforce each other's work through creative use of tools such as SPA. The mission could encourage staff linkages for ongoing discussions of collaborative opportunities.

- USAID could invite the Peace-Corps education program officer to discuss both missions' goals in the sector and to explore ways they might collaborate on achieving them through SPA.
- USAID personnel could initiate a review of a mission's effort in education with a view to seeing where they might improve impact, local participation, and sustainability through use of SPA.
- Where there is no SPA program, a USAID mission could invite Peace Corps to submit an SPA agreement for consideration.
- As SPA monies may generally be support counterpart training, USAID and Peace Corps could meet with selected private voluntary organizations to examine needs that training might constructively address.

3. Assignment of PCVs to USAID projects as their primary responsibility

In this formal arrangement, the Peace Corps recruits, trains, and assigns PCVs to perform duties within a USAID project. In this arrangement Peace Corps provides normal services to the PCV, such as housing, travel, training, medical, security, living allowance, liaison with host organizations, and official clearances. However, while the Peace Corps

ensures that the USAID project is consistent with the volunteer's project plan and its overall country strategy. USAID manges the project. The PCV's work is often facilitated by the use of project workspace, equipment, transport, and local support staff. On occasion, the PCV may benefit from special project-organized training. It is important that a detailed agreement be entered into so there is no misunderstanding as to who will provide what in terms of living support and professional supervision. The arrangement is straightforward, and no money changes hands between agencies—the PCV's services are simply integrated into a USAID project.

Examples of this kind of collaboration

- A PCV works with a project technical advisor on developing management information systems in a ministry of education.
- A PCV works with a project technical advisor on restructuring a teacher education program.
- A PCV works with a project technical advisor on disseminating curriculum materials to schools.
- A PCV works with a project technical advisor on developing or updating a science curriculum.

- A PCV helps update management practices at an agricultural college.
- A PCV works with a project technical advisor on developing literacy and numeracy materials.
- A PCV works with a chamber of commerce that USAID is reorganizing in the interest of promoting more productive small enterprise.
- A PCV works with a community or NGO that is receiving support from a USAID project. (This arrangement retains the emphasis on being assigned to a local community, agency, or NGO for the cultural experience while providing planned and targeted technical assistance in the interest of both Peace Corps and USAID.)

Ways to increase the chances of success

- USAID can include Peace Corps when designing a new initiative and create other opportunities for this kind of collaboration.
- USAID and the Peace Corps can collaborate to recruit people with the background necessary to work on a USAID project. For example, USAID can provide exact descriptions of the positions it needs. If Peace Corps determines that recruitment for a position is beyond its

capabilities, it can notify the field in time for other arrangements to be made. Thus, both agencies can benefit from knowing each other's needs.

- Peace Corps can communicate its recruitment schedule to USAID, so that both institutions can plan for the timely provision of PCV technical assistance.
- USAID and Peace Corps staff can have training on how simple it is to implement a collaborative effort of this type.
- USAID and Peace Corps staff can negotiate roles and responsibilities to ensure that PCVs receive proper support without confusing supervisory or decisionmaking overlap.
- Peace Corps can continue its emphasis on PCVs' living and working in the communities they serve. This can help reduce any tendency of PCVs to center their social lives within the expatriate community and so miss an important part of the "Peace Corps experience." USAID and Peace Corps can agree on the expectations for recruited PCVs to ensure that they gain the "grassroots" experience they volunteered for, even if they work on a USAID project.
- Peace-Corps preservice training can help PCVs understand and appreciate the full

value of their services, especially if they will work as part of a well remunerated USAID team.

Ways to promote this type of collaboration

- A USAID mission could routinely involve Peace Corps in the initial stages of project development to determine if collaboration is appropriate.
- USAID could routinely facilitate discussions between the managers of its contracted projects and the Peace Corps to identify unanticipated work roles for which a PCV might be suitable. On occasion, a qualified PCV already in-country might be available. On other occasions, the Peace Corps might ask headquarters to recruit a candidate for a forthcoming group.
- USAID could delegate staff to attend the annual Peace Corps orientation. This would help the agencies identify common development thrusts and possibly lead to ideas for useful collaboration.
- USAID could ask Peace Corps to brief USAID program officers on its country goals, projects, plans, and operations.
- USAID could organize a retreat at which both Peace Corps and USAID would present their country goals, programs, projects, plans, and operations.

- Peace Corps could hold a workshop for USAID and contractor staff on the goals of the Peace Corps over and above specific PCV development tasks. At the workshop, Peace Corps could spell out how PCVs work in communities and participate in associated civic work. (This is the same information given to PCVs in their preservice training.)
- USAID could review a mission's effort in education with a view to seeing how the grassroots help of PCVs—integrated into USAID projects—could contribute to impact, local participation, and sustainability.
- USAID could invite the Peace Corps education program officer to discuss USAID projects and explore how the use of some PCVs might contribute to the goals of both organizations.

4. Contract with a Peace Corps mission to manage a USAID project

In this type of collaboration, USAID's relationship to a Peace Corps mission is much the same as it is with a contractor, i.e., Peace Corps manages a project designed by USAID. Peace Corps makes contractually obligated inputs, takes agreed-upon actions, and accomplishes timely and quantifiable outcomes in accordance with an accepted

framework and contract. As in any project relationship, USAID receives regular reports on verifiable indicators and deliverables, and the contractor (Peace Corps) operates in accordance with an agreed upon workplan and within a detailed project budget.

If stipulated in the agreement, Peace Corps may employ management and logistics personnel specifically for the project. In that case, daily project administration and supervision is not added to the responsibilities of Peace Corps program officers and administrators. Oversight of those hired for administration of a specific project is, of course, the responsibility of regular Peace Corps officers. The arrangement is analogous to that of a traditional contract organization that employs a chief of party and others to manage a project. The chief of party and others are responsible to the officers of the contract organization that is accountable to USAID.

A major difference is that unlike other contracted organizations, Peace Corps officers are in the field rather than in the United States. Another difference is that rather than hire technical advisors for work in the field, Peace Corps recruits PCVs with qualifications for the fieldwork.

As with any contracted project, Peace Corps purchases and operates vehicles and other equipment specified in the contract, and carries out all necessary project functions, such as the development and dissemination of materials, organization of local committees, training and organizational development, liaison with government and NGO offices, supervision of PCVs, and handling of protocols. Peace Corps also takes care of its usual services for PCVs, i.e., housing, travel, training, medical, security, living allowances and official clearances. USAID funding may be from the local mission or from a special USAID/Washington fund. In either case, Peace Corps, as the contract organization, reports to the local USAID mission.

Examples of this kind of collaboration

- A Peace Corps mission is contracted by USAID to manage a nationwide home gardening and family nutrition project. A USAID-funded contract organization started and ran it for two years. Peace Corps is doing a three-year follow-on in the interest of promoting sustainability through the orderly transfer of the project to community hosts. The project involves a great deal of village level organizing, liaison with two ministries,

and instruction in technical subjects, basic literacy, and business practices. USAID's intent is to influence government policy and change village practices with respect to food production and consumption. The project is labor intensive and requires people who can communicate in the local language. Thus, Peace Corps is an ideal implementing organization. To operate the project, Peace Corps has employed a project director, business manager/payroll clerk, secretary, mechanic, and drivers. The permanent Peace Corps staff person to whom the project director reports is the program officer for agriculture. The project business manager reports to the associate peace corps director for administration. PCVs in the project report to the project director. The secretary, mechanic, and drivers report to the project business manager. Peace Corps is accountable to the local USAID mission that is funding the project directly. The Peace Corps program officer for agriculture reports on the project to the USAID program officer for agriculture. On major issues, the Peace Corps country director collaborates with the USAID mission director.

- A Peace Corps mission is contracted to install seventy-seven water systems for drought relief under a special disaster assistance provision. Whereas funds for the project described above came directly from a USAID mission budget, these funds were directed from USAID/Washington to Peace Corps/Washington. However, the local USAID mission reviewss, approves, and monitors the project.

  In this case, the Peace Corps is organizing the work through fifty-four PCVs already in the field, who are taking this on as an extra duty. Because the project is an opportunity to teach in an applied way, it meets the Peace Corps requirement for community service. Considerable organizing is taking place so that beneficiaries will "own" the installations. Communities are contributing labor, land and some materials. Most installations are on school grounds and will be followed up and managed by local school personnel once Peace Corps has finished. As in the project above, the Peace Corps has hired project-specific staff, i.e., a business manager, a water engineer/construction manager, secre-

tary, and drivers. The fifty-four PCVs work on day-to-day implementation with the project-specific staff. They and that staff report to the Peace Corps associate director for education. The Peace Corps country director reports progress periodically to Peace Corps/Washington and to the USAID mission director.

Ways to increase the chances of success

- USAID and Peace Corps can study how well this arrangement has worked.
- Peace Corps can inform USAID staff of its ability to recruit PCVs with backgrounds appropriate for assistance on a contracted project.
- USAID staff can be apprised that such work for a PCV is entirely compatible with the need for a community-oriented work and cultural experience.
- USAID can communicate to Peace Corps the possibility of employing additional management staff with project funds for the express purpose of operating a major project.
- USAID can better appreciate, and plan for, the potential contribution of PCVs' technical skills and knowledge of local language and culture to a USAID effort.
- Since work on a USAID-designed project could enhance the careers of se-

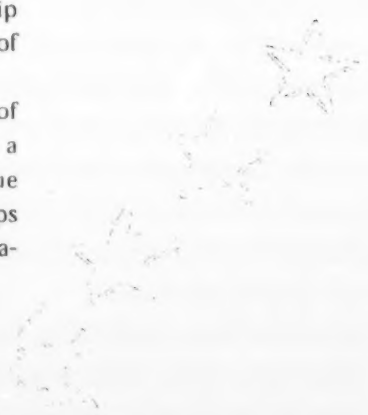
lected PCVs, USAID and Peace Corps can collaborate to provide such opportunities.

- Peace Corps missions can look to this model as they seek new ways to meet evolving challenges in the developing world.
- As both agencies are challenged to "do more and more with less," Peace Corps and USAID personnel can "make the time" to consider the benefits of collaboration on common work and goals.

Ways to promote this type of collaboration

- USAID and Peace Corps could periodically think about needs of the host country that they might best address together by drawing on their special strengths and unique approaches.
- A USAID mission could routinely involve Peace Corps in predesign discussions.
- A USAID mission could notify Peace Corps of work that it may put out to bid. If Peace Corps has an interest, there could be discussions to see if the work is something that could be done well by Peace Corps while also contributing to Peace Corps goals in the country.

- USAID staff could invite Peace Corps education officers to discuss the examples of contract work above and to explore possibilities for a relationship that would address the sectoral goals of both organizations.
- USAID staff could initiate a review of the mission's effort in education with a view to seeing where the unique grassroots capability of Peace Corps might improve impact, local participation, and sustainability.



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Education and Training
RRB 4.06
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1611 N. Kent Street #200
Arlington, Virginia 22209
Tel: 703-351-4006
Fax: 703-351-4039
E-mail: docorder@dec.cdie.org

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